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deemed it no small advantage thus to compare notes, directly upon the field, with one so deeply versed in European geology as Mr. Lyell. It is this freedom from sectional jealousies and local interests which makes the commonwealth of science "one and indivisible." It is this spirit which ever distinguishes the naturalist who is worthy of the name. We do, indeed, remember something of an anonymous newspaper article, in which the engagement of an eminent foreign geologist to lecture before a popular audience was seriously complained of, as a positive wrong and discouragement to native talent, and our own geologists were warned against allowing foreigners to poach on their preserves. But this narrow spirit, peculiarly ungenerous under the circumstances, is, we trust, entirely dispelled.

There is a single paragraph in Mr. Lyell's book which we strongly desire to see erased. We cannot pass by this blemish in silence, and we have no desire to render it more prominent by quotation. Yet we cannot open that page without wondering how such a piece of bad taste could have found admission. The sentence to which we refer is to be found on page 163 of the first volume. The gratuitous sneer at the "young ladies, filled with an exceeding sense of their own wickedness," is bad enough in itself; but it is unfortunately aggravated, surely without Mr. Lyell being aware of it, by the context, which almost irresistibly points its application to the families of his own friends and acquaintance.

ART. IX. — CRITICAL NOTICES.

1. — *The True Grandeur of Nations: an Oration delivered before the Authorities of the City of Boston, July 4, 1845.* By CHARLES SUMNER. Second Edition. Boston: Published by the American Peace Society. 1845. 8vo. pp. 96.

THE real subject of this discourse is more clearly indicated by the advertisement, "Published by the American Peace Society," than by its more formal and comprehensive title. It is a Peace tract, in the rhetorical dress of a popular oration. In-

deed, the choice of the title is in some measure significant of the character of the whole performance. The orator is so thoroughly absorbed by his theme, that it seems to him to embrace the entire sphere of national grandeur. It is enough to make a nation great, that it systematically avoids all war, offensive or defensive, with other powers. We grant that this may be the highest proof of national grandeur; yet it is possible that without this a nation may be great, or with it, contemptible.

It is gratifying to see, that the tone of our anniversary harangues is undergoing a radical change. From the vapid commonplaces of self-adulation, varied chiefly by the praises of ancestors, every eulogy of whom was only a more delicate compliment to the hearer who claimed the merit of their blood, we are beginning to ascend to higher and more edifying themes, — to the discussion of our duties and our dangers. Our festival of thanksgiving wears in part the garb of a fast. Many a bold and earnest call has been sounded from the rostrum, where before was heard only the voice of party hate or self-complacent patriotism. In this class of addresses the one before us deserves a high place. It is full of honest, manly, and Christian sentiment, uttered with a frank disdain of concealment or compromise. Even where our judgment halts a little, it takes our sympathies captive. After exposing in strong terms the savage character of war, its horrible consequences and its fruitlessness, the discourse passes to an examination of the influences and prejudices which have kept up so monstrous and absurd a system. It denies the necessity of war; makes no account of the practice of nations; condemns the tolerant or temporizing tone of the Church; explodes the vulgar ideas of honor; subordinates patriotism to philanthropy; and, after displaying with a most imposing and insuperable array of statistics the enormous expensiveness of a military establishment, and insisting on the utter uselessness of all national defences, advises us at once to turn our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into pruninghooks, and not to learn war any more.

We are not aware that the treatment of the subject of this oration is distinguished by great originality; nor do we suppose that the orator was ambitious of such distinction. The strength of his positions lies in their plainness. The horrors, the follies, the sacrifices of war are near the surface, and need no divining-rod to detect them. They are, however, set forth with a vigor which must leave a fresh and abiding impression on the mind of the reader. We are persuaded, that the only way to extirpate war is never to let the subject rest, but again and again to bring home to the public mind new proofs and illustrations of the great principles of universal peace, and to ring in the ears of

our rulers the solemn proclamation of their responsibility. There can be no exaggerated picture of the dark side of war, — and it has no bright side. We care not how sharply the spirit of Christ is set in contrast with the spirit of the world. Neither war, nor slavery, nor party spirit can be extinguished, till the breath of Christian life is breathed into the hearts of the people. To persuade them fully of the unchristian spirit of war is the surest way to convince them of the possibility of its extinction. Where there is a will there is a way, and war must eventually cease in the more perfect day of Christian civilization.

So far we go with the orator. But when from the symptoms of the disease he passes to the cure, and proposes at one sweep to put an end to war by abolishing its ways and means, we are somewhat startled. To bring about a radical revolution in national ethics, and digest anew the law of nations, a system which has been the work of many centuries, must be the work at least of many years. By a just law of retribution, the rubbish of old abuses remains long after the main structure has fallen down. We are not suffered to bask to our liking in the sunshine of our sins, without shivering in the night that follows. "*Nec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus*," might be the lamentation of many a sorrowing philanthropist of our own day.

The orator rejects the phrase "defensive wars," as absurd, on the ground, that, in the present advanced state of civilization, no nation would dare to disgrace itself by an attack on a defenceless neighbour. We hope this is true. But when we have before our eyes the invasion of Turkey by Russia, the bombardment of Acre, the expedition against Afghanistan, and the occupation of Scinde, to say nothing of the opium war in China, a little skepticism as to the probable forbearance of the same civilized powers, in the absence of all resistance, may be borne with. Nor are these cases which can be summarily dismissed with the sentence, "Let the dead Past bury its dead." How near extinction the war spirit in France is, the events of the last few years amply demonstrate. And when we see, on the least rumor of a declaration of war, thousands of volunteers crowding to our western frontier, eager less to defend their country than to have a fight, and read the pugnacious exhortations of our patriotic newspaper press, we may doubt of the safety of those nations who, content with the panoply of meekness, should throw away the more vulgar harness of brass and steel. We question if the celebrated example of William Penn, backed even by the grave authority of Mrs. Child, will be sufficient to divest of a certain paradoxical air the assertion, that "every new fortification and every additional gun in our harbour is not a

safeguard, but a source of danger to our city," because, if national defences do not exist, "there can be no aliment, no fuel for the flame" of war. We must say, we wait for more proof. The doctrine of this address does not even make an exception in the case of a conflict between a savage and a civilized state. The case is possible, and the barbarian, who is incapable of understanding the more refined expedients of negotiation, mediation, &c., may be the aggressor. How shall he be dealt with? Nor are we quite clear, that no violation of national right short of an armed assault can be so flagrant as to justify a resort to immediate force by the injured party. Whether such a war shall or shall not be styled defensive is a question of terms only. In the efficacy of a congress of nations, arbitration, or negotiation, the orator has great faith. Our hope is stronger than our faith. The nations, as yet, are far from forming a brotherhood, and we have some apprehension of an active centrifugal force. Should a single nation prove recreant, we must come to arms at last. To say that the issue of war is of all things the most doubtful, and that justice cannot be established by an appeal to brute force, disposes of the difficulty only when you have shown some better resort. The very ingenious and striking parallel drawn by the orator between national wars and the old wager of battle is the most original and effective portion of the address. But public opinion had been won over to the side of order and justice before that ancient practice was abolished; and till the public opinion of nations has become also imbued, by successful experiment and the interchange of national courtesies, with the fraternal sentiment and the love of peace, we can hardly expect a single nation to demolish its forts and arsenals. But every thing now makes for peace, and the hope of the philanthropist becomes every day more reasonable.

These few remarks have left us little room for any observations on the literary execution of Mr. Sumner's Oration. We could wish there were even less; so difficult is it to apply to this whole *genus* of anniversary addresses the ordinary canons of criticism. Our Fourth of July rhetoric is one of the most indubitable tokens of our national independence. Borrowing from the mother country the homely Anglo-Saxon phrase, and from our Gallic ally the swell and pomp of Parisian declamation, we have seasoned the mixture with enough of patriotic truculence to establish our title to the compound. According to the varying proportions of these elements, we have every shade of style from the florid to the tawdry, and from the pedestrian to the bombastic. The Juvenal of our day might forget the "*Augusti recitantes mense poetas*," though we are not quite sinless in

that matter, in the more heinous offences of an earlier month. The address before us, free as it is from the nauseous fustian of its race, is somewhat infected with the license of the season. There is abundant evidence of the ability of the author to distinguish himself as a rhetorician and orator. There are glowing passages in this address, which thrill the very soul. There is here and there a pomp of language, a procession of gorgeous periods, that hurries the reader irresistibly and willingly along. But these spots are interspersed and intersected by veins and seams of quite another ore. We are sometimes surprised and disappointed by a prosaic dash in the very midst of an eloquent paragraph, and occasionally bewildered by a chaotic confusion of metaphors. It would be ungrateful and unfair to ransack a popular oration for instances of bad taste and faulty expression. And yet, where a performance bears ample marks of supplementary additions, we could wish that the author's privilege of retrenchment had also been more liberally exercised. This allusion to Ziska's skin is absolutely revolting:—"God forbid that his [Washington's] sacred character should be profanely stretched, like the skin of John Ziska, on a militia drum to arouse the martial ardor of the American people." Nor is this comparison of man to the lion in Paradise, with the quotation annexed, quite to our liking:—"History shows the sure progress of man, like the lion in Paradise 'still pawing to get free his hinder parts,' but certain, if he be true to his nature, to emancipate himself from the restraints of earth." The very confines of courtesy are reached in the phrase, "Respectable citizens volunteer to look like soldiers," considering the circumstances of the occasion. We must also call the author's attention to the incongruity of the several kinds of physical elevation and moral grandeur that are huddled together in the following passage:—"As the cedars of Lebanon are higher than the grass of the valley; as the heavens are higher than the earth; as man is higher than the beasts of the field; as the angels are higher than man; as he that ruleth his spirit is higher than he that taketh a city; so are the virtues and victories of Peace higher than the virtues and victories of War." Once more, we cannot conceive how, in his description of the massacre of the Roman senators by the Gauls, the author could have tortured Livy's *in vestibulis ædium* into "in a temple."

But we gladly abandon the invidious work of verbal criticism. We have but a word to say on the general structure of this address. That it should be somewhat amphibious in its nature is not surprising. By the necessity of the case, it is a cross between an oration and an essay; and logic and rhetoric cannot

but be at loggerheads here and there. This is the author's misfortune. But we think he exceeds his privilege. After the text had been distended to its utmost capacity by allusion and quotation, the overflowing fragments are with a somewhat too scrupulous care caught, as in a bowl, in the notes below. The array of authors cited and characterized is oppressive. The page is so overloaded with them, that it absolutely reels and staggers. But these blemishes are but specks ; and we gladly take leave of the orator with the honest hope, that we may often hear his free and fearless voice in the defence of struggling truth, and in the assault upon established errors.

2. — *Report of the Committee appointed to make the Annual Examination of the Grammar Schools in the City of Boston.* 1845. 8vo. pp. 147.

By the rules of the Boston School Committee, two sub-committees, of three persons each, are annually appointed in the month of May to conduct a general examination of these schools. One of these committees examines the schools in the grammar department, and the other examines them in the writing department. Formerly, these committees examined all the classes in the schools ; but as the increasing number of schools and of scholars made this duty very arduous, it was provided a few years ago, that they should limit their examination to the pupils of the first class.

As is the case in every department of human life, the duties of these several annual examining committees have been discharged with various degrees of thoroughness and ability, according to the capacity, leisure, and conscientiousness of the members composing them. As a general rule, however, the examinations have been superficial, or, at least, not thorough and searching ; and this not from want of good-will or a sense of duty on the part of the committees, but partly from inexperience and partly from want of time ; the members of the school committee being generally persons engaged in the duties of active life, who had not the leisure requisite to bring so many large schools to any thing like a decisive test of their merits. This year, the duty of examining the schools in the grammar department was committed to singularly competent hands. The members of the committee were Mr. Theophilus Parsons, who, by his great activity of mind and widely varied attainments, does honor to an honored